



The Difference Between Conservation and Efficiency

Combine behaviors and technology to save

MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

BILLY P. JONES

THESE DAYS THE TERMS energy conservation and energy efficiency are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct definitions. I like how the U.S. Energy Information Administration differentiates the two based on behavior and technology.

Energy conservation is a behavior—using less energy. To achieve it, consumers have to change their habits: Turn off lights, unplug appliances or opt to use a clothesline instead of a clothes dryer. Conserving energy often requires effort.

There’s merit in adopting conservation habits to avoid waste, but we also have the option to use less energy without having to give up comfort or convenience.

That brings me to energy efficiency, which involves applying technology to use less energy while getting the same result or service.

using less energy. Energy Star-rated refrigerators, for example, keep food cool with about half as much energy as older models.

Energy efficiency often ultimately results in energy conservation—or using less energy.

Smart electricity usage is important to Navarro County Electric Cooperative because it’s beneficial to you, our consumer-members.

For one, using less electricity saves you money on your electric bill simply because you consume less. But it also benefits the co-op as a whole because our wholesale power costs fluctuate depending on the time of use.

You see, the cost of power increases during peak hours—typically 3–7 p.m. during the summer. So if we can diminish the use of power during those hot afternoons, then the cooperative’s total wholesale power cost decreases. Those savings are passed along to you.

In addition, those in the electricity industry, including Navarro County EC, are always trying to find ways to reduce consumption because there could be a shortfall of electricity generation in the future. Establishing energy conservation and energy-efficient habits now will help us use electricity more wisely down the road.

I encourage you to use the principles of energy conservation and energy efficiency together. Just because you install an energy-efficient LED in the light fixture on your front porch doesn’t mean you should leave it on 24/7. And even if you have an Energy Star-rated clothes dryer, be a good steward and think twice

about running it with anything less than a full load.

By combining energy-efficient technology with conservation-minded behavior, you can save electricity and money. ■



CAROLYN WOODCOCK | ISTOCK.COM

Technological advances allow us to automatically perform some actions we used to have to do manually. Because new electric products are able to do the same tasks with less energy, energy efficiency does not necessarily come with the trade-off of going without.

LEDs are considered energy efficient because they use less electricity to produce the same amount of light as an incandescent bulb. In the same way, Energy Star-rated products are intended to deliver the performance consumers expect while



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Use Ladders Safely Outdoors

ANYONE WHO USES a ladder should take extra precautions when working outdoors around electrical hazards—to prevent shock or electrocution.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has recommendations for work sites that can be applied to anyone using a ladder—whether for personal use or on the job.

- ▶ Before using a ladder, identify nearby overhead power lines. Note their distance from work areas and always assume power lines are energized.
- ▶ Consider the length of the ladder you're using, allowing room for raising and lowering the ladder.
- ▶ Contact Navarro County Electric Cooperative if work needs to be done near overhead power lines.
- ▶ Don't use metal ladders near power lines.
- ▶ Ensure conductive objects are kept at least 10 feet away from lines.
- ▶ Make sure that ladders are stable, level and supported to prevent movement into a power line.
- ▶ Carry ladders horizontally, not vertically, and have someone help carry and set up large ladders.
- ▶ For every 4 feet between the ground and the upper point on which the ladder rests, set the feet of the ladder out 1 foot horizontally.
- ▶ Never touch a person or ladder that has made contact with an overhead power line. Call 911 and Navarro County EC immediately.

Falls are always a possibility when using ladders. Follow these guidelines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to avoid a spill.

- ▶ Inspect ladders for damage before use.
- ▶ Only use ladders on stable, level surfaces.
- ▶ Always face the ladder and maintain three points of contact when climbing it.
- ▶ Do not use a ladder while it's in a closed position.
- ▶ Do not use the top step of a ladder unless it was designed for that specific purpose.
- ▶ Do not move a ladder while a person or piece of equipment is on it.
- ▶ Observe the maximum load rating of the ladder and be aware of the user's weight combined with any equipment.
- ▶ Place nonfolding ladders so that they extend at least 3 feet beyond the point of support. ■

Navarro County Electric Cooperative

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24/7

Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

LOCAL

(903) 874-7411

TOLL-FREE

1-800-771-9095

ABOUT NAVARRO COUNTY EC

NCEC owns and maintains more than 3,000 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 12,000 members in Ellis, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and Navarro counties.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

BILL PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Online at navarroec.com
- Through the SmartHub app
- By phone at 1-855-385-9975
(Phone payments are not accepted on the NCEC office line.)

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

NCEC provides *Texas Co-op Power* and TexasCoopPower.com to give you information about events, safety, special programs and other activities of your cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the co-op office.

VISIT US ONLINE

navarroec.com



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Budget-Friendly Efficiency Upgrades

THERE ARE TWO WAYS to measure energy efficiency improvements. There's the payback period—the amount of time it will take for the improvement to pay for itself. Then there's comfort. Improvements can often increase the comfort level of a home—not easy to measure but one of the driving forces behind home weatherization efforts. There are several areas of the home that can be improved easily, without breaking your budget.

Lighting

There has been a steady decline in the price of LED bulbs for residential consumers. Nowadays, 60-watt-replacement LEDs can be purchased for \$5 or less. LEDs should save 60% or more on power costs compared to incandescent bulbs and last for many years. New LED fixtures are also an affordable option. They come with LED bulbs built in so you never need to change the bulbs.

Heating and Air Conditioning

The Energy Information Administration estimates that heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems account for 22% of a typical home's annual electric bill. While newer systems can be 20%–45% more efficient than older ones, the upfront cost is often a barrier to adoption.

But there are still ways to save. Simple solutions such as

changing air filters at least every three months will increase airflow to rooms, increase the life of the HVAC unit's motor and improve air quality in the home. Sealing and insulating ductwork can be done in a weekend and results in energy savings of up to 20%.

To lessen the amount of work that heating and cooling systems need to do, it is important to find and seal air leaks. Look for leaks around exterior doors and windows, electric outlets, and entrance points for TV and phone cables. Also check dryer vents and any place with an opening in the wall. To seal leaks, apply caulk, spray foam or weatherstripping to these areas.

Simple acts such as cooking outdoors on a hot summer day or keeping curtains closed to keep out the summer sun will keep the interior of your home cooler and reduce the amount of time AC units need to operate.

Appliances and Electronics

The appliances and gadgets that make life easier are also among the largest users of electricity in our homes. When buying a new appliance, narrow your choices to only those with an Energy Star label. That simple act can result in a 10%–15% savings in energy consumption.

Other simple household tips:

- ▶ Clean dryer lint traps after every cycle, and don't overdry—you'll save energy and extend the life of your clothes.

- ▶ Replace worn refrigerator door gaskets to stop cool air from leaking from the refrigerator.

- ▶ Clean refrigerator coils and keep fridges away from heat-generating appliances such as an oven.

Home electronics, like computers, TVs and game systems, consume power even when turned off—what are known as “energy vampires.” According to a study conducted by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the average home loses 8% of its monthly energy consumption to these vampires. A full 75% of the power used to run home electronics is consumed when those appliances are turned off, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Cutting off power by using a power or smart strip is an easy way to stop this needless waste of energy.

The best energy efficiency improvements are often the easiest. Turning lights off when leaving a room, sealing windows and doors, and cleaning refrigerator coils aren't as much fun as buying a new appliance. But these simple tasks are proven ways to save energy and increase comfort on a budget. ■



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Landscape With Energy Efficiency in Mind

THOUGHTFUL LANDSCAPE DESIGN can help keep your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter—a boon for your electric bill. The smart placement and selection of trees enhances not only the appearance of your property but also its energy efficiency.

A well-placed tree can save up to 25% on a home's air conditioning bill, and a shady, grassy yard can be much cooler than a sunny, paved yard. Plus, mindful landscaping can provide erosion control and clean the air by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen.

Plant deciduous trees on the south and southwest sides of the house to provide shade from the sun in the summer. After deciduous trees lose their leaves in winter, the sunshine will help heat your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs on the north and northwest sides of your home to provide shade year-round.

Evergreens also provide a windbreak, so plant them where they will protect the home from cold wind in winter and hot wind in summer. For maximum protection, plant windbreaks at a distance from your home of two to three times the expected height of the mature tree. Windbreaks have the added benefit of reducing noise, increasing privacy and creating wildlife habitat.

In more temperate areas, consider arranging landscaping features to direct summer breezes through the house.

Before planting trees or other plants, consider their proximity to the house and power lines.

Avoid planting any trees too close to the home if they require frequent watering.

If there are overhead power lines in the neighborhood, plan to leave plenty of space between what will be the tree's mature size and the lines.

To identify the location of underground power lines and other utilities, call 811 before you dig. ■

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BRINGING POWER — TO THE — PEOPLE

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LINEMAN

A CAREER AS A LINEMAN gives you strong skills, good money and a powerful mission. As a lineman for a Texas electric cooperative, you'll enjoy professional earning potential while continuing to build in-demand skills and experience throughout your career. Most important, you'll be working for an organization with purpose and long-term goals that relies on you every day.

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